

His herbarium must be remarkably rich in western plants, and is deposited, as we understand, among the collections of the Davenport Academy of Sciences.

In Dr. Parry's death we lose another of our veteran botanists, and the day seems not far distant when an entirely new generation will stand for American botany.

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### BRIEFER ARTICLES.

**The system of arrangement of genera in the National Herbarium.**—In order to facilitate the work of reference to the specimens in the National Herbarium, the following system of arranging and labeling the orders and genera has been adopted by Dr. Vasey:

Durand's Index<sup>1</sup> has been taken as the basis for nomenclature and arrangement. This book forms a compact index of the genera and orders of Phanerogams, based upon the *Genera Plantarum* of Bentham and Hooker, and published with Hooker's approval. The *Genera Plantarum* was published in parts, covering a period of twenty-one years, ending in 1883. The changes in nomenclature during this period, notably those brought out in DeCandolle's *Monographs*, have been incorporated in the work. It will be, for many years to come, the standard index to the genera of Phanerogams, and the general use of its numbers by botanists will greatly aid reference to and between large herbaria. Our standard check-lists, too, should use the same numbers for orders and genera.

The general plan and arrangement of the genera and orders in the work is that of the *Genera Plantarum*, the Gymnosperms, however, being placed last. The orders are consecutively numbered, and the genera arranged in each systematically and numbered, beginning in each order with 1. In addition, the genera are provided with another set of numbers, beginning with the first in *Ranunculaceæ* and running on consecutively to the last in *Cycadaceæ*. This gives to each genus a ready reference number, and is one of the important features of the work.

Before describing the labels to be used in the National Herbarium it is necessary to state that hanging over the front of each shelf is a stiff flap (12 by 5 inches) of cloth-covered binders-board on which are marked the name of the order and the genus or genera to which the plants on that shelf belong.

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<sup>1</sup> *Index Generum Phanerogamarum*, . . . . Conscriptis Th. Durand. Bruxelles, sumptibus auctoris. 1888. (8°, pp. xxi, 722. £1.)



Order labels are printed in heavy-faced capitals followed by the number of the order. This is pasted on the center of the flap. If the order is entirely exotic, the label is printed in red ink. The same color is used for foreign genera, as described below. This device saves a large amount of time when one is looking over the shelves for American plants.

The genus labels are of two kinds, one for the shelf-flaps the other for the genus covers themselves, both printed in heavy-faced type.

The shelf flap genus labels consist of the name of the genus preceded by its consecutive number in Durand, and followed by its number in the order to which it belongs, thus:

4742. *Asclepias*. 63.

These labels are pasted one below another in their numerical order, beginning at the upper left corner of the flap. As the name and number of the order are already on the flap, it is considered unnecessary and undesirable that they be printed with the name of each genus. The authority for the genus is also considered entirely unnecessary. If the genus is wholly exotic, or is large, and one or more shelves contain only exotic species, their labels are printed in red.

The genus-cover labels, which are pasted on the lower left corner of the genus-cover, contain the name of the genus, with the number of its order below, and its consecutive number still lower, thus:—

*Asclepias*

Order. 116

4742.

This form of label enables one to know precisely to what place to return a bundle of specimens which has been taken from the shelves. The number of the order is inserted as being often desirable. If any genus-cover contains entirely foreign species its label is printed in red.

In this system but few complexities occur. Perhaps the least rare are those cases in which a genus in Durand is treated by American authorities as two or more genera. When this occurs the American generic names are adopted, using in parenthesis, the numbers of the genus to which Durand refers the American genera.

The use of Durand's Index seemed at first to be objectionable for the reason that the *Genera Plantarum*, which must of necessity be the more used of the two works, had a different numbering. This difficulty has been removed by simply renumbering our copy with ink.

This is to be done also with our copies of Gray's *Synoptical Flora*.—  
FREDERICK V. COVILLE, *Assistant Botanist, U. S. Department of Agriculture*

**Penicillium and corrosive sublimate.**—*Penicillium* has a way of upsetting all "facts" with regard to the habitat of fungi. Dr. J. N. Hurty, of Indianapolis, has sent to the writer a flour paste which he prepares and which contains a considerable amount of mercuric chloride, completely